

DHSS Partners with Google, Partnership for Drug-Free Kids to Bring Online Resources to Delaware Families

WILMINGTON (Nov. 21, 2019) – The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), [Partnership for Drug-Free Kids](#) and Google have launched a first-in-the-nation partnership to bring needed resources to Delaware families looking for help online for a loved one struggling with substance use disorder.

DHSS will work with Partnership and Google to identify communication strategies aimed at increasing online awareness of available treatment and recovery services for Delaware families. These strategies are designed to connect individuals struggling with behavioral health issues and their families to resources as quickly as possible and, in many cases, to do so in real-time.

“Helping families find that connection to care for their loved ones when they need it most is one of the most important things we can do in state government,” Delaware Governor John Carney said. “I am grateful to the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids and Google for their collaboration to serve families in need across our state.”

“We’re honored to support the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids and DHSS in their work supporting Delaware families impacted by substance abuse,” said Google Director Adam Barea. “We hope this pilot will help more families have access to quality online resources and put more Delawareans on the path to recovery.”

“We are honored to be working with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services and Google to help those struggling with substance use in Delaware,” said Fred Muench, president of Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, which recently merged with Center on Addiction. “We know that families in Delaware are using Google to search for help for their loved ones and we are proud to be part of an effort to get them the credible information and support that they need.”

In 2018, the number of Delawareans using Google to search for information on substance use ranked in the top 10 of all U.S. states. Additionally, Delaware ranks first in the U.S. for Google searches of methadone, a medication used to help people suffering from opioid use disorder to stave off withdrawal and cravings.

The launch comes just before the holiday season, which can be a particularly difficult time for individuals and their families struggling with addiction. Because of the added pressure of family gatherings, substance use often escalates, relapses occur, and many states, including Delaware, often see a spike in overdoses and overdose deaths.

Google will provide \$500,000 to the Partnership as well as in-kind technical assistance to the Department of Health and Social Services’ Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH). The technical assistance will help connect Delawareans with quality resources for those suffering from substance use disorder as well as for their caregivers – such as the Partnership’s [helpline](#). It also includes the production of a series of videos featuring testimonials from Delawareans impacted by the addiction epidemic.

“Every day, we see the horrible toll that the opioid epidemic takes on Delaware families and families across the country,” said DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker, a practicing family physician. “This new collaboration with the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids and Google will bring critical online resources

to Delaware families when the need is most urgent. When someone is ready to begin treatment, that connection to care is one of the most important moments in the journey to recovery.”

A Wilmington father, whose son is now in recovery, knows how difficult it can be to make that connection. “In addition to having 19 years of sobriety, for 25 years I have helped hospitals and providers develop better patient engagement and improved outcomes through health care technology,” said Mike Lang of Wilmington. “If anyone was equipped to navigate the complexities of today’s health care, it was me. I learned just how difficult it was to navigate our health care system during a family crisis when my son overdosed. This initial crisis marked the beginning of a three-year recovery journey.”

In 2017, Delaware ranked sixth in the nation in drug overdose death rates, with most of those deaths directly linked to opioids – including heroin, prescription opioids and fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is 50 times more powerful than heroin. Last year alone, Delaware lost 400 lives to overdose, marking an increase of 16% in overdose deaths from 2017. Nearly three in four of those deaths involved fentanyl. The state is on pace to lose a similar number of lives to overdose in 2019.

To be connected to treatment and recovery resources in Delaware or nearby states, individuals and families also can visit DHSS’ clearinghouse website for services, HelpIsHereDE.com.